

# Targeted Brownfield Assessment Oakridge Industrial Park, Oakridge, Oregon

## Project Overview

The Oregon Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) completed a Targeted Brownfield Assessment (TBA) at the 220-acre Oakridge Industrial Park in June 2001, under a Cooperative Agreement with EPA Region 10. The purpose of the TBA was to supplement previously gathered data to define more precisely those areas of the site needing further investigation or cleanup, and, conversely, those areas requiring no further action.



In 1995, the City of Oakridge acquired this former Pope and Talbot/Bald Knob Mill, located in the Cascade Mountain foothills southeast of Eugene (see map at left). The mill closed in 1990 and part of it burned in a 1991 fire. Since 1995, the City has worked with DEQ to investigate and clean up portions of the property, with the objective of redeveloping it in phases as an industrial park. Lacking the resources to conduct further work on its own, the City requested a TBA in March 2000 to help complete the extensive investigations still needed at the site.

Before acquiring the property, the City performed a site investigation based on results of investigations and cleanups that previous owners of the site had conducted from 1989-93. In the Summer of 1995, the City installed 13 shallow monitoring wells, excavated over 60 test pits to depths up to 10 feet below ground surface (bgs), and collected six sediment samples from on-site ponds. While contaminants were found in soil, sediments, and groundwater, no imminent human

health or environmental threats were discovered. Nonetheless, DEQ determined that further investigation and cleanup was required in several areas prior to redevelopment. Using grants, long-term loans and relying on DEQ's oversight, the City performed a series of investigations and removals, leading to DEQ no-further-action determinations on about 50 acres of the site by 1999.

## What We Did

Following EPA's quick approval of the project in March 2000, DEQ developed a scope of work for the TBA using results of previous investigations. DEQ documented this scope of work in the

*Sampling and Quality Assurance Plan*, dated June 26, 2000. In August 2000, DEQ conducted field work, consisting of: 1) excavating over 50 test pits to between 4 and 12 feet bgs, and obtaining soil samples at various depths from each pit; 2) collecting groundwater samples from the 13 shallow monitoring wells that had been installed in 1995; and 3) collecting 16 surface water and 18 sediment samples from log ponds, cooling water ponds, storm water collection ponds, a wildlife pond, and an unnamed stream. EPA laboratories analyzed these samples for metals, polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs), pesticides, and formaldehyde. Samples were also analyzed for volatile and semi-volatile organic compounds (VOCs/SVOCs), including polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs) and pentachlorophenol. Nine soil and sediment samples were also analyzed for dioxins.

### **What We Found**

Many samples of near-surface and subsurface soils, groundwater, surface water, and sediments were contaminated. DEQ screened soil data against U.S. EPA Region 9 Preliminary Remedial Goals (PRGs) for residential and industrial soils; groundwater data against PRGs for Tap Water and federal drinking water standards; surface water data against National Ambient Water Quality Criteria; and sediment data against PRGs for residential soil. Using these criteria, DEQ conducted a preliminary human health risk assessment to determine whether exposures to these contaminated media might present unacceptable risks. Data from each well were compared individually to screening levels. This preliminary evaluation excluded an assessment of potential human health or ecological risks associated with groundwater/surface water interactions, as well as the consideration of potential ecological risk in general.

From this preliminary human health risk assessment, DEQ determined that certain locations on-site may present unacceptable risks to human health as a result of exposure to contaminants in soil, groundwater, surface water, and sediments. To address these potential risks, DEQ found that further action was needed in the former stormwater collection ponds, log ponds, and cooling water ponds. In addition, DEQ concluded that on-site groundwater should not be used for any purpose without prior DEQ approval.

At the same time, the TBA provided DEQ sufficient data to confirm that parcels covering about 75 percent of the site needed no further action and could be released for redevelopment. It is EPA's funding of this major TBA project that provided the data needed to clear significant portions of the site for future development, and thereby enhance the prospects for new jobs in this economically distressed community.

### **The Next Steps**

The City of Oakridge has hired a consultant to develop a specific scope of work and cost estimate to address environmental issues discussed in the TBA, and expects this work to be completed in 2001. As funding permits, the City will then make plans to undertake the work needed to make this entire former mill site an industrial park that is available for unrestricted use.

### **For more information, please contact:**

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